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Inventory
for
Manuscript Collection
MS - 4

Captain Edward L. Carter Papers

1834-1898
Bulk: 1864-1886

by
Elisabeth Meier
January 2018

½ box
.25 linear feet
Accession no. G78.7, G78.15

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Abstract

Edward L. Carter, Captain (1835-1891)

Papers, 1834-1898

Bulk dates: 1864-1886

½ box (.25 linear feet)

Seafaring family from Woolwich, Maine.

Papers largely related to the maritime activities of Captain Edward L. Carter (1835-1891) and his family of Woolwich, Maine. The bulk of the collection consists of letters and instructions sent to Edward L. Carter by the Houghton Brothers of Bath, ME, the managing owners of the vessels that Carter commanded for thirty six years. The papers also include one vessel clearance certificate given to Carter's father, Captain Charles W. Carter (1808-1878). There is no personal correspondence in this collection.

Gift of Esther C. Groves.

MS-004. Accession #G78.7 and G78.15.

Finding aid in repository. Other related collections in repository.

Added entries—persons:

Carter, Edward L., Captain
Carter, Charles, Captain
Carter Family
Chamberlain, Joshua L.

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):

Arabia (ship)
Armenia (ship)
Austria (ship)
Bohemia (ship)
Butler (schooner)
Caledonia (ship)
Charles E. Moody (ship)
Columbia (ship)
Crescent City (ship)
Loud, Claridge & Co.
Harry Morse (ship)
Hecla (ship)
Henry P. Mason (three-mast schooner)
Houghton Brothers
Parthia (ship)
Percy & Small
Prussia (ship)
Servia (ship)
Sutton & Co.
Van Vleck & Co.
W.R. Grace & Co.
Williams, Blanchard & Co.

Added entries—key terms:

Cape Horn trade

Customs service
Grain trade
Pilots and pilotage
Ship brokers
Ship captains
Shipping
Ships - Owners
Shipyards – Bath (ME)
Woolwich (ME)

Acquisition

These papers were donated to the Maine Maritime Museum by Esther C. Groves, great-granddaughter of Captain Charles Carter and granddaughter of Captain Edward Carter. They can be identified by accession numbers G78.7.1-G78.7.2 and G78.15.1-G78.15.5.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

Physical Condition

The documents are in good condition. The bound volume is fragile but readable.

Processing Notes

This collection is a combination of two separate gifts from Esther C. Groves, both received in March 1978. They have been integrated for clarity.

Related Materials

There are several collections related to the Carter Family. MS-3, the Carter Family and Otis Family Papers, overlaps closely with this collection and includes items directly related to documents found here. SM 49/5 is a logbook kept by Edward L. Carter on his final voyage in the *Parthia* in 1891; SM 8/7 is a receipt for Carter's donation to a Liverpool museum. MS-5, the Captain Charles J. Carter and Cassie R. Carter Papers, contain detailed letters, logs, and other material written by Edward L. Carter's cousin and family.

Historical Note

Captain Edward L. Carter (1835-1891) was born in Woolwich, Maine. He went to sea at age 15, beginning a long career that would include thirty-six years in command of vessels managed by the Houghton Brothers of Bath. He married Mehitable Otis in 1858. They sailed together extensively for the remainder of Carter's life, and lived by land in Woolwich in a home that included, in 1880, Edward's widowed mother, five sisters, one of whom was married, three children, and a niece and nephew. Carter's commands included the *Clara Ann* (ship), *Caledonia* (ship), *Columbia* (ship), *Armenia* (ship), and *Parthia* (ship). Edward L. Carter died aboard the *Parthia* in San Francisco after the ship's maiden voyage in 1891.

Edward Carter's father, Charles William Carter (1808-1878), was also a shipmaster. He commanded the vessels *Ganges* (ship) and *Butler* (schooner).

The Houghton Brothers built, owned, and managed a substantial fleet of ships in Bath. Beginning with a retail store founded by Levi Houghton in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Houghton family gradually expanded its commercial reach into vessel ownership and, later, shipbuilding. They launched their first vessel in 1819. Houghton vessels were involved in long-distance trades, including the transatlantic cotton market and California grain business. They also imported salt from Europe to Bath for use in shipbuilding. The last ship the Houghtons launched for themselves was the *Parthia* in 1890; the firm disbanded during World War I.

Scope and Content Note

This collection is composed of business letters and documents saved by the Carter family. The bulk of the collection consists of letters and directions from the Houghton Brothers to Captain Edward L. Carter between 1864 and 1886. This covers the years that Carter commanded the ships *Caledonia*, *Columbia*, and *Armenia*. The letters provide a detailed account of how the Houghtons managed their vessels, captains, and business in general away from Bath. They cover a variety of topics, including finding cargos and managing repairs for Carter's ships, as well comments and directions regarding other vessels in the Houghton fleet. They also chart the expansion of the Houghton's shipping routes from the Atlantic to the Pacific and demonstrate the firm's deepening trust in Carter as he became one of their senior captains.

Other documents in the collection include an 1834 clearance certificate for Captain Charles Carter's schooner *Butler*; pilot's orders for the ship *Parthia*; and an 1898 dividend record from Percy & Small for the *Henry P. Mason* (three-mast schooner). There is also a proclamation from Maine Governor Joshua Chamberlain declaring a day of "public humiliation, fasting, and prayer" on April 4, 1867, in keeping with a state and national tradition of fast days.

Box and Folder List

Box	Folder	
1	1	Clearance certificate, *Butler* (schooner), Captain Charles Carter, 1834
	2	Bound volume of letters from Houghton Brothers to Captain Edward L. Carter, 1864-1882
	3	Letters from Houghton Brothers to Captain Edward L. Carter, 1882-1883
	4	Letter from Houghton Brothers to Captain Edward L. Carter, 1886
	5	Freight and Disbursement Record, Percy & Small for the *Henry P. Mason* (three-mast schooner), 1898
	6	Proclamation, Governor Joshua L. Chamberlain, 1867
	7	Pilot's Orders, *Parthia* (ship), Captain Edward L. Carter, 1891